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L3: Entry 6 of 8

File: USPT

Aug 9, 1994

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5337246 A

TITLE: Flexible apparatus and method for applying customized rating adjustments to transaction charges

Brief Summary Text (17):

A second type of system customized rating by permitting a customer to enter discount or surcharge fee amounts manually into the system. An example of this type of system is discussed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,072,397, also assigned to the assignee of the present invention and is herein incorporated by reference. U.S. Pat. No. 5,072,397, issued Dec. 10, 1991, to Barns-Slavin, et al., relates to a carrier management system which enables determination of charges with discounts. Applicable discounts are based upon a limited number of discount criteria as determined and entered manually by the user for the transaction. Manual entering of adjustments to the base rate proved to have very limited capability due to human error, user tampering with rates, and length of time necessary to enter numerous discount schemes for a transaction. Due to lack of integrity in a manifest generated as a result of manual input in these prior systems, the carrier was required at considerable cost to additionally audit and police the use of discounts as implemented by the user/customer. The carrier would not be inclined to treat the manifest as a billing document due to this lack of integrity. Typically auditing procedures entailed cross-reference back to a contract previously negotiated between the carrier and the shipper. Since cross-referencing required a manual look up of the negotiated customized rate, the pattern of customized rate adjustments offered by the carrier to the customer would be limited in scope in order that it would be manageable for the carrier to conduct its auditing procedures. The carrier would avoid offering numerous discount patterns to customers in efforts to ensure less cumbersome auditing procedures and to prevent auditing procedures from becoming error prone.

Detailed Description Text (17):

Referring now to FIG. 7, therein is illustrated the keyboard 14 of a preferred carrier management shipping system in accordance with the invention. The keyboard includes three sets 100, 200, 300 of keys. Each of the keys has a label printed thereon corresponding to the primary function of the key. Secondary and tertiary functions are printed above and below the keys showing additional functions that depression of the associated keys may enable.

Detailed Description Text (49):

The system automatically continues by calculating the applicable Discount/Surcharge Fee Rate for the given mail piece at step 112. It does so, without further user input, by calling the Discount/Surcharge Processing Subroutine which will be described later in greater detail below with reference to FIGS. 14 to 22. Rates Subsystem 34 calls Discount/Surcharge Subsystem 38 to calculate the applicable discounts and surcharges. After executing the Discount/Surcharge Processing Subroutine, Discount/Surcharge Subsystem 38 returns the discounts and surcharges to Rates Subsystem 34 and Rates Subsystem 34 reports the base charge, the discounts and surcharges to the application software 32 for posting of all applicable charges to the manifest file at step 114. The reported charges are also used to update the user statistical report file at step 116.

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